

School Programs Commodity Update

What's New in the Food Distribution Program for Schools

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Business Process Redesign - A Sweeping Change

A sweeping redesign is overtaking the commodity nutrition programs. It is called “*Food Distribution 2000: Transforming Food Distribution for the Next Millennium.*”

This initiative is using the “business process reengineering” approach to make fundamental changes to the commodity programs. The goal is not only to give schools better service but also to make the programs operate more efficiently. USDA’s partners in this effort include the states, schools, American Commodity Distribution Association, American School Food Service Association, and industry.

USDA brought together teams of federal, state and local representatives to develop suggestions for improving the commodity programs. USDA used these suggestions as the framework of its current plans for improvement.

We are now finalizing plans after receiving extensive feedback from our commodity partners and customers. These plans should be on the USDA *Food Distribution 2000* web site at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/fd2000/fd2000.htm in the early Fall of 2000.

USDA intends to put its plans for improving the commodity programs in place as soon as feasible. It may be several years before all changes are fully

implemented. The more complex improvements, such as those involving processors, are being tested using pilot projects. Eleven pilot projects are currently underway.

While it is too early to report findings from the pilots, look for a status report on the web site next month.

USDA is committed to change. The results will be a better program—one which provides significantly enhanced service to schools, and makes more efficient and effective use of taxpayers' dollars. //

Date to Remember....

September 2000

**National Food Safety Education
Month**

More Entitlement Commodities

The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 provides additional entitlement funding in fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2001.

Because of this Act, USDA received an additional \$34 million in FY 2000 funding, and will receive between \$70 and \$80 million in FY 2001.

For this school year, USDA plans to use these additional entitlement funds to purchase close to 50% more fruits and vegetables for schools in the first quarter of school year 2001. //

Bonus Commodities are Plentiful in School Year 2001

USDA determines bonus purchases based on information provided by the requesting industry, national inventory levels, and crop predictions. During this school year, we will be offering many of the standard commodities along with a number of new items.

Thus far, schools have been offered cranberry sauce, dried cranberries, and dried cherries for delivery September through December 2000.

Canned peaches and canned tomatoes have been offered to schools for delivery July 2000 through June 2001.

Also offered is a new type of trail mix. The mix contains dried cherries, cranberries, dates, dried plums, walnuts, and fig pieces. Deliveries will be in September through December 2000.

Schools are now receiving frozen apricots (including 4 ounce cups as a test buy) for delivery August through October 2000.

Additionally, frozen strawberries have been offered to schools for delivery October through December 2000.

We will continue to let you know via the *Commodity Update* the type of bonus commodities schools will receive. //

At first, the additional change in the specification resulted in higher beef prices. We anticipate that prices will go down once industry incorporates the changes into their standard practices. //

Expect Abundant Bonus Commodity Purchases

Fiscal Year 2001 will be a banner year for fruit and vegetable commodities!

Congress has made \$200 million available to assist American farmers with surpluses of certain fruits and vegetables. As a result, schools and other outlets will be able to reduce their expenditures for these products. //

Date to Remember....

**October 8-14, 2000
National School Lunch Week**

SY 2001 Ground Beef Purchases Specification Improved

As you may be aware, in June, USDA-AMS tightened its specification for raw ground beef products that are distributed to schools and other outlets to require additional tests for disease-causing pathogens. The new requirements are designed to raise safety assurance levels for these products.

Initially, these new testing requirements delayed some of the ground beef purchases. This delay has been temporary. AMS has worked hard with industry to implement the new requirements and ground beef purchases are now getting back on schedule.

SOC Offers New Product

Under the State Option Contract (SOC) Program, USDA enters into an agreement with State distributing agencies to have bulk commodities converted into finished end products. SOC products are bid and purchased by USDA, and the costs of the raw commodity are deducted from a State's entitlement. Processing costs are billed to the State.

The new chicken item available under SOC this upcoming school year is Grilled Chicken Patties available in 30-pound boxes.

The new SOC item may be served as an entrée, or served as a patty sandwich to enhance your school lunch program. //

Commodity 101 Video

As a part of the USDA Business Process Reengineering communication effort, we have produced a video entitled *Commodities 101*. This video provides fundamental information on the commodity programs. The subjects covered in the video include:

- Purchase planning;
- Federal and State roles;
- Basic commodity ordering concepts, and
- How commodity procurement supports agriculture markets.

Copies of the video will be sent to State Distributing Agencies and State Child Nutrition Program Directors soon. Additional copies of the video will be available shortly for purchase from the National Food Service Management Institute either through their website at www.nfsmi.org or by calling 1-800-321-3054.

Date to Remember....

September 2000

**National Food Safety Education
Month**

Commodity Recipe Exchange to Provide Links to Industry Resources

Once again we encourage FDD web site users to go to the Commodity Recipe Exchange web page to see what's there.

We will add more recipes to the Exchange early this school year. After that, we plan to change the focus of the page from recipes we provide to links to other recipe sources.

As you know, there are many recipe sites available on the Internet. Industry groups, associations, food companies, and health organizations are examples of sources. We will provide the service of linking our FDD site to these sources through the Recipe Exchange.

If you know a recipe source you would like to share, please let us know and we'll add it. Remember that the purpose of the Recipe Exchange from its inception has been twofold: (1) to assist schools in serving hard-to-use commodities, and (2) to give national attention to regional favorite recipes and serving suggestions. By providing links, we can expand the choices almost endlessly. The Recipe Exchange will then become a one-stop site for anyone looking for new ways to offer innovative and creative meals that are appealing to children.

Please send us the Internet addresses for any recipe sources you have. You can send them to our Internet address fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or fax them to 703-305-1410. Visit the Commodity Recipe

Exchange Page at
www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/ADMINISTRATION/RECIPES/recipes.htm
on the Food Distribution web site. //

Be Smart. Keep Foods Apart... Don't Cross Contaminate

"Be Smart. Keep Foods Apart. Don't Cross-Contaminate." The theme of this year's National Food Safety Education Month (NFSEM) will focus on the importance of food safety education. This theme was derived from one of the four most important food safety steps that restaurants and foodservice professionals perform each day—cleaning, separating, cooking, and chilling.

NFSEM is sponsored was created by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's International Food Safety Council. Now in its sixth year, it has become a major food safety education focus for government and consumer organizations, as well as industry. It was recognized by President Clinton's National Food Safety Initiative.

September's month-long activities will emphasize food safety education and training for restaurant and foodservice managers and employees. Everyone is encouraged to conduct training and awareness programs to promote safe food handling and preparation.

Increased awareness and participation are essential to the success of the initiative. This is why the Foundation's Council is offering an *Industry Training and*

Promotion Guide for industry professionals to use to aid them in their participation. It is an easy "how-to" guide that provides ideas on how to get involved in NFSEM 2000 activities. The free guide is available through the www.foodsafetycouncil.org web site.

Also, the USDA and FDA joined forces with the restaurant and food service industry to invite you to participate in this annual event. USDA and FDA developed a *Consumer Education Planning Guide 2000* for food safety educators, filled with resources to plan your events.

The kits were distributed to 40,000 food safety educators, including 23,000 school food service district directors, and cooperative extension agents. The kit includes a full color Fight BAC! poster and classroom materials. For a copy of the kit, contact the Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555 or e-mail: Gertie.Hurley@usda.gov Check out the new kit materials for NFSEM on the Web site: www.FoodSafety.gov/September //

A Change in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

President Bill Clinton announced the release of Dietary Guidelines 2000 in his radio address on Saturday, May 27, 2000. USDA's Secretary Glickman and HHS's Secretary Donna Shalala later released the fifth edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans at the National Nutrition Summit in Washington, D.C. on May 30.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide recommendations based on current scientific knowledge, on what Americans should eat to stay healthy. They are revised every 5 years. They make ten recommendations, a change from the seven recommendations of past editions.

For ease in understanding, the recommendations have three basic messages: the ABC's –
 Aim...Build...Choose for good health.
 The Guidelines are for healthy Americans ages 2 years and above.

- **Aim For Fitness**: aim for a healthy weight and be physically active each day.
- **Build A Healthy Base**: let the Pyramid guide your food choices; choose a variety of grains daily, especially “whole grains”; choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily and keep food safe to eat.
- **Choose Sensibly**: choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat; choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars; choose and prepare foods with less salt. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

The “keep food safe” guideline is a significant new element that was added to the Dietary Guidelines. Consumers are advised to prepare and keep food safely at home. They should keep preparation areas and utensils clean and separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods. Also, cook foods at a safe temperature and promptly chill perishable food.

You can download the Dietary Guidelines and related information from the Internet at www.usda.gov/cnpp //

Note . . .



*We encourage you to browse
 our web site to
 obtain all of the latest information
 on Food Distribution Programs.
 Visit our web site*

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd>

Healthy Eating in Schools

Every day, school children face challenges to healthy eating. They include: a lack of enough time to eat lunches, meals that are not scheduled in the middle of the day, and food choices which do not contribute to healthy eating patterns. Another concern is that school meals, which often include healthful foods donated by the USDA, face competition with foods high in fat and sugar sold at school fundraisers or in vending machines.

Several steps have been taken to address the issue of healthy eating among the Nation's school children. USDA held a superintendent's roundtable and a National Forum to gather information. Representatives from a cross section of interested parties which included the education, health, business and academic

communities met and provided input by sharing and exchanging information.

Additionally, USDA hosted a Medical Association Round Table with five major medical organizations. These organizations (the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, National Medical Association, and the National Hispanic Medical Association), have committed their memberships to work with USDA, schools, and communities to make balanced eating a priority in every school. This group issued a "Call to Action" which includes a Prescription for Change to promote healthy eating in schools.

A short, professionally made video and brochure were developed highlighting issues raised during the National Forum. This video and brochure are available in a "how-to" action kit. The kit also contains: a "how-to" guide, support materials, reprints of several background materials, the medical group's Call To Action, and a PowerPoint presentation on CD-ROM (also available as transparencies) all packaged in a briefcase style box.

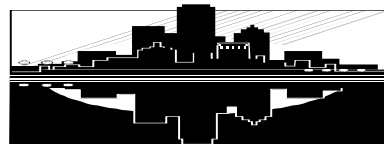
This "how-to" action kit is designed to assist interested people at the local level with assessing their current school environment, targeting areas for change, and developing and implementing an action plan. The kit can be used by anyone interested in working with their local school to make changes. Visit the Team Nutrition Home Page at www.fns.usda.gov/tn to get more information and to order a kit. //

Comments

If you have any comments on *the School Programs Commodity Update* or any questions on our products or service, we have an Internet address specifically for this purpose: fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or you can write to Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 520, Alexandria, VA 22302. //

Acronym List

AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FDD	Food Distribution Division
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FSA	Farm Service Agency
HHS	Health and Human Services
IQF	Individual Quick Frozen
NFSEM	National Food Safety Education Month
SOC	State Option Contract
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture



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